

Senator Kent  
CONRAD

Senator Byron  
DORGAN

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# Senate Passes Interior Appropriations Bill

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) --- Indian health and education programs in North Dakota will receive a boost from the Interior Appropriations bill approved by the U.S. Senate Tuesday, as will important projects to restore and develop key tourist sites in the state, according to U.S. Senators Byron Dorgan and Kent Conrad.

The bill also includes language Dorgan offered in the Appropriations Committee that modifies the matching funds requirement for Weatherization assistance program funds to help low-income homeowners make their homes more energy efficient. Without the modifications, North Dakota stood to lose more than \$1.38 million in weatherization funding.

In a joint statement following the 97 to 2 vote, Dorgan and Conrad said, “This bill is a significant step in the right direction in providing key funding for Indian health and education initiatives, as well as funding for tourism development. There is, however, still much more that needs to be done and we will continue working to try to meet those needs.”

The bill provides funding for key North Dakota projects and initiatives:

• North Dakota Tribally-Controlled Colleges	\$ 5,900,000
• Energy and Environmental Research Center (EERC) at at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks	\$ 4,200,000
• United Tribes Technical College, Bismarck	\$ 2,381,000
• Renovation of Mandan On-A-Slant Village	\$ 500,000
• Lewis and Clark activities at Knife River Villages	\$ 180,000
• Lewis and Clark activities at Theodore Roosevelt National Park	\$ 120,000

The bill also includes an additional \$5 million in grants for local community projects celebrating the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Dorgan, who is co-chairman of the Senate Lewis and Clark Caucus, helped to secure this money through his seat on the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee.

Nationwide, Indian School construction will gain \$276 million for fiscal year 2001. Indian Health Services nationwide will receive over \$2.1 billion in the coming year.

The House passed its own version of the bill on June 16th. A House-Senate Conference Committee will reconcile differences between the bills.

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